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30 October 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Conversation with Mr. Walter N. Elder, Executive Assistant to the Director, Regarding IDEALIST Mission 3236

1. At go-no-go time 1400 hours local, 29 October, I was advised by Mr. Duckett that the COMOR Working Group at 1220 hours had indicated orally to him, presumably through the Chairman of COMOR, that as a result of their study of the problem of targeting in the Sino-Indian border area that the flight programed for the area north of Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal (Mission 3236) was no longer required. It is my understanding that the Working Group was going to formally report their findings to the COMOR on Thursday of this week.

2. Coming as it did at the very moment of the go-no-go briefing and in the temporary absence of the Chairman of COMOR, I felt it necessary to seek guidance from the Office of the Director as to whether the instant mission should be launched or not. Accordingly, I got in touch with Mr. Elder.

3. Realizing the predicament we were in and conscious of the fact that there was less than an hour to clear this matter up before the mission had to be scrubbed in the face of good flying weather [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Mr. Elder took the matter up personally with the Director.

4. At approximately 1435 hours Mr. Elder called me back at the Control Center and said that it was the Director's wish that the mission proceed as planned; that the entire deployment was to support the stated aims and desires of the Secretary of Defense and that the latter expressly asked for complete coverage of the Sino-Indian border area, not simply for portions thereof. On the basis of the advisory from Mr. Elder the mission was released at approximately 1440 hours.

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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